The Messenger September 2019

The First Church of Monson, Congregational/UCC 5 High Street, Monson MA 01057 413-267-3312

office@firstchurchmonson.org www.firstchurchmonson.org www.facebook.com/firstchurchmonson

The Church Office is usually open on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9 AM to 1 PM. Pastor Peter is usually in his office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10 AM to 3 PM or by appointment.

Please visit our website and calendar at www.firstchurchmonson.org.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!



The Mission of the First Church of Monson is to praise God through prayer, to share the Word and love of God by promoting fellowship in the community, and to serve as stewards of God's creation – all in a manner that glorifies God and emulates Christ.

BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment.
Care for the poor.
Forgive often.
Reject racism.

Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources. Embrace diversity.

Love God. Enjoy this life.



FROM THE



Somewhere in this church, I am told, is a banner which used to hang in the sanctuary. Across the top, it reads, "BE THE CHURCH." I haven't found it yet, but I'm going to. And I want to hang it up again.

I also want to tell you that, in some ways, we don't need the sign. Why? Because, last month, I saw the church being the church at its very best.

Each week when we gather for worship, we pray with each other, and lift those prayers up to God. One Sunday, I watched when a deacon invited us to get up and form a circle around someone who needed extra prayer.

The next day, I was over at Wilbraham United Church for Vacation Bible Camp, where I saw a First Church member volunteering to help our youngest disciples celebrate "Christmas in July."

On my way into the church, I met a member of our Called to Care team as they were setting out to visit some of our older folks.

After visiting someone in the hospital, I saw one deacon picking up laundry from the person's home and another deacon checking to see if the plumbing was working properly. And I know that if those folks needed meals delivered, or rides to doctor's appointments, that we would somehow make it all happen.

We do this kind of thing all the time, but the remarkable thing is that all of this work happened in the space of two days. This was First Church being the Church, and this was First Church being the very best it can be. And we are truly blessed to do this work.

Peace,

Peter

"Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are the body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

-Teresa of Avila



The Hampden Association of the Southern New England Conferences of the United Church of Christ, and the First Church of Monson, Congregational, United Church of Christ are pleased to invite you to

The Installation of
The Reverend Peter D. Johnston
as the 24th Settled Pastor of the
First Church of Monson, Congregational
United Church of Christ

Sunday, September 22, 2019 4:00 p.m.

The Reverend Joseph M. Amico, Pastor of the Tabernacle Church in Salem will be our guest preacher.

Special music will be provided by
The combined choirs of
First Church of Monson and
Quincy Point Congregational Church.

A reception will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

Attention All Singers!!

Choir rehearsals are about to begin!! If you love to sing, please join us this year. Senior choir will begin rehearsing on Thursday, September 5, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the chapel. Our Director of Music Ministry, Kiel Krommer, has been planning an exciting new season of music including a celebration of music at our October 20th Music Sunday. The music will celebrate American composer Gordon



Young who devoted his life to composing church music, including variations on hymn tunes, preludes, and postludes. This year marks the hundredth anniversary of his birth and a lifetime of gifted compositions used widely in churches everywhere. Kiel extends a welcome to former, present, and new choir members to join in worshipping through music. Hope to see you there!



Sunday School classes start September 8, 2019

This year's theme "Finding Jesus in the Sea"

"When you go through deep water, I will be with you." Isaiah 43:2



Michelle will be overseeing the nursery every Sunday. A volunteer helper is needed for each Sunday so that two people are in the nursery in case one needs to leave with a child. Please contact the Church Office at 413-267-3312 or office@firstchurchmonson.org or see Carolann, Sunday School Superintendent. A long-term commitment is not required to help out.



The Fanfare Brass Choir will present a free concert funded in part by the Monson Cultural Council at First Church of Monson on Saturday, September 28, 2019. The group will perform music from the sixteenth century to the present, covering many styles of music including classical, jazz and light popular. A pre-concert dinner of barbecued chicken, rice, vegetables, and dessert will be served at 5:30 p.m. for

a donation of \$15.00 to benefit the church's music program. Tickets may be purchased by contacting the Church Office at office@firstchurchmonson.org or 413-267-3312. The concert is free and open to the public; donations are willingly accepted.

HEARTS WILLING CLUB

Please join us on Wednesday, September 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for our "Welcome Back Pot-Luck Picnic Dinner." There will be a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall. All ladies are welcome to join us and learn about our programs and to connect with friends.

Sale of Lot 14 on Park Road

The Board of Trustees has accepted an offer of \$60,000 for Lot 14, a vacant parcel that First Church owns on Park Road. Anne Sroka, who owns the adjacent land on Park Road (Bob Fay's old house), is the purchaser. According to her attorney, she has no plans for the land. She just wants to expand and preserve her yard. The property extends about three-fourths of the way down the slope behind First Church's parking lot.

This parcel was a part of the former Monson Academy property that the Church obtained as a gift in 1991 from the Xifaras family. At considerable expense, the trustees took down the fire-damaged dormitory on the site, planning to sell the land as a building lot. Unfortunately, there was not enough frontage on Park Road, and the abutting landowners on Ely Road would not sell the Church enough property to make the lot buildable. So there it sat for nearly thirty years.

The trustees will use the proceeds to help pay off the debt from the exterior painting of the church last summer. The Town on Monson will be happy to have this land back on the tax rolls again!

A reminder to all individuals and groups using First Church:



Please be sure to turn off all lights, close interior doors, and pull the exterior doors tightly closed upon exiting the building! Thank you.

SUMMERFEST BOOTHS UPDATE



First Church sold popcorn, candy, soda, and water at the June 22 fireworks, and more popcorn and beverages as well as strawberry shortcake and lemonade on July 4 at Summerfest. These booths together raised \$1, 382. Another \$560 was raised by selling space in our parking lot!

Donations for the purchase of supplies came from Carrie, Leah, Florence, Paul & Linda, Elaine & Gary, Pastor Peter, Jean, Crystal, Jeff, Roy & Lyle, Mary, Diana, and Mary Lou. Joseph and a kitchen crew prepared the biscuits and strawberries with syrup. Ted and Joseph handled the parking. Suzanne paid for the rental fees for both booths.



Kate set up a beautiful fireworks booth and staffed it all evening with the help of her family. They sold out every beverage and raised \$531!

On July 4, Kate, Gary, Doug & Suzanne, Ted, and Chris set up the Summerfest booth. Kate & Steve, Pastor Peter, Kristy, Anne, Mary, Alexander, John Plaster & Chris, and Joseph manned the booth in shifts. Bill helped Ted, Doug, and Kate take down the booth. The Kelleys then cleaned up the containers, prepared leftovers for sale at church, and stored coolers, etc. in their attic for next year.

The weather cooperated on both days, and the Summerfest booths were a success. Pastor Peter was also pleased with the community connection that the booths provided. Thanks to all who made it possible!

Suzanne, Summerfest Booths Coordinator



On Friday, October 4, 2019, your Outreach Committee is sponsoring a

Comedy Night FUN Raiser

Come and enjoy the comedy of three comedians from Jess Miller Comedy. Laugh out loud with friends and family. Have a feel good, rib-splitting time! PLUS, you'll have opportunities to win fabulous prizes.

The Comedy Show will be held at the Valhalla Quaboag Country Club from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For your convenience, tickets may be purchased by emailing firstchurchcomedy@gmail.com. See you there!

The Music Committee of the First Church of Monson, 5 High Street, will hold its annual Christmas Dinner and Concert on **Saturday, December 7, 2019**, at 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at the church. The menu will include appetizers, a main entrée of chicken Alfredo, vegetables, salad, and dessert. Sarah the Fiddler will perform her Christmas program following the dinner. Tickets for the dinner and concert are \$20.00 and may be obtained by calling contacting the Church Office at 413-267-3312 or office@firstchurchmonson.org. For those who just want to attend the concert, the ticket fee is \$10.00.